

David T. Toomalatai; Pfc. George D. Torres; and Staff Sgt. Joshua Whitaker, as well as Carson resident Pfc. Daniel P. Cagle of Carson who were all killed in action.

Perhaps the most consequential victory of the War on Terror came earlier this year when Osama bin Laden's life was finally ended by a group of Navy SEALs who deftly carried-out a covert operation at bin Laden's secret compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. I am extremely thankful for President Obama and his Administration's firm leadership in the effort to bring bin Laden to justice. With a renewed sense that justice has been served, we must return our focus now to protecting our citizens at home, and assuring our veterans a prosperous future.

As President Obama said earlier today "It's important for us to express our thanks in words, but it's even more for us to express our thanks in deeds." It is now our turn to stand up for our troops at home as they courageously stood up for us in battle.

Our troops are returning home to a tough economy. They are returning home to an unemployment rate for veterans that is 2.5% higher than the national average. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to put aside our differences and come together in our commitment to ensure veterans returning home receive all the resources they need. No measure of action we take in Congress can ever truly repay our troops for their sacrifices, but I vow to do all that I can to ensure that the country they fought and sacrificed for gives back to them all that they deserve.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, while keeping the American people safe should always be our top priority, now we must refocus our priorities and our resources into protecting our homeland, educating, training and employing the American workforce, and ensuring our veterans a prosperous future in the nation they fought to defend. Over the last ten years, American taxpayers have spent billions rebuilding Iraq. We must now be willing to make the same investment of time and resources to rebuild our economy so that it provides a standard of living and quality of life worthy of the heroic sacrifices made by the men and women who risked their lives to defend our way of life and freedom.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 14, 2011*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 200th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia.

Freemasonry has been active in the United States for over two hundred and fifty years. Since its founding in 1811, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia has encouraged interaction and discourse among individuals of differing beliefs by promoting community service, civic responsibility, and civil debate.

The Grand Lodge of D.C. has participated in the development and strengthening of our na-

tional institutions of government, including the United States Congress and Judiciary, Presidency, and Executive Branch Agencies, as well as the Capital's historic landmarks such as the White House, Smithsonian Institution, Washington Monument, and Washington National Cathedral. The Grand Lodge of D.C. has been greatly involved with the enrichment of Washington, D.C., with members establishing prominent institutions such as the Corcoran Gallery and George Washington University, and has been actively engaged in charitable projects. The Masonic Foundation of DC has provided tens of thousands of dollars each year in financial scholarships to college students who attended D.C. public schools. Participation in numerous community service projects include Hands on DC, Adams Morgan Day, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Doctors Without Borders, So Others May Eat, St. Baldrick's Foundation for childhood cancer research, DC Community of Hope, DC Central Kitchen, and DC Special Olympics.

The Grand Lodge of D.C. has been involved domestically and abroad in countries such as Armenia, Cuba, and the Philippines. It also hosted the 2008 World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges, the largest gathering of Masonic leaders in history, to discuss ways to build a global civil society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia. For 200 years, the Grand Lodge of D.C. has supported the Freemasonry founding principles of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth," and continues to do so today, supporting the American ideal that individuals can coexist peacefully and come together to form a community, regardless of background and differences.

#### IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 13, 2011*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1905, the Iran Threat Reduction Act.

I thank Chairwoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Ranking Member BERMAN for crafting this important, bipartisan bill. H.R. 1905 was reported out of the Foreign Affairs Committee by voice vote and comes to the floor with over 350 cosponsors—of which I am one.

We must make it clear to Iran that any pursuit of a nuclear weapons program is unacceptable. This bill is designed to significantly strengthen the hand of the Obama Administration in applying economic pressure on the Iranian regime.

Specifically, the bill targets Iran's petroleum sector by expanding the activities that could trigger sanctions to include making certain petroleum resource agreements with Iran. It also requires the President, subject to a national security waiver, to impose sanctions on entities doing business with the Central Bank of Iran if he determines the Central Bank is linked to the Iranian nuclear program. The

measure also requires entities filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission to disclose business ties with Iran.

By most accounts, the sanctions passed by Congress last year have ratcheted up pressure on the Iranian government. But Iran continues to increase its stockpile of enriched uranium. This measure is necessary to give the President the tools to penalize the Iranian regime for its continual refusal to heed the objections of the international community.

I encourage my colleagues who have not already expressed support for H.R. 1905 to join me in support of the bill.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 14, 2011*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, 1995, when the last attempt at a balanced budget amendment passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 300–132, the national debt was \$4,801,405,175,294.28.

Today, it is \$15,060,274,082,298.88. We've added \$10,258,868,907,004.60 dollars to our debt in 16 years. This is \$10 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### IRAN THREAT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 13, 2011*

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, in June 2010 President Obama signed into law the most far-reaching and carefully targeted sanctions ever imposed on Iran. Later that same month, the Administration also succeeded in bringing the United Nations Security Council to issue further, multilateral sanctions. In May, the United Nations issued a report demonstrating that these multilateral sanctions were having a serious, deleterious impact on Iran's ability to pursue nuclear weapons.

The reason these sanctions are having such an impact is that they have garnered the cooperation of allies around the world, who saw that this Administration was willing to engage Iran. If those allies now deem that we are turning back from that posture of engagement, and returning to the unilateralism of the Bush Administration, I am concerned that our effort to isolate the Iranian regime will collapse. It is the comprehensive diplomacy of the Obama Administration that has unified our European allies and brought them on board. That could end.

And in addition, the sanctions called for by H.R. 1905, are less targeted and more indiscriminate. They will have an impact, but that impact will not be directly related to our justified concern over human rights or Iran's nuclear military goals. Rather, they would hurt Iranians of all walks of life, including those we hope will become an effective opposition to